

Scale down your bait choice for winter success

Anglers still want to cast a line, even if we are heading into winter, and top coarse angler Rob Wootton provides some hints and tips for those who fish small commercials, particularly for F1 and carp, and want to add more fish to their net.

The biggest piece of advice the England international can provide is to scale down bait choices as the fish are not likely to be aggressive as they were in the summer months.

Wootton (pictured) was in the Drennan Team England Aqua team which recently won in the European Feeder Cup and the angler said: "Water temperatures are going down, it is getting colder, and the fish are not feeding as aggressively as they were a month ago, so you need to scale down your bait choices.

"When you are fishing with a hybrid feeder you can't go anywhere without some 2mm soaked miscos, this is the staple for putting around our feeder. That does not mean it is the only thing going around the feeder, but that is what we are going to start with and 2mm Swim Stim original micros are the staple. They soak up water perfectly."

Wootton, who won the individual competition in the Feeder Cup with team-mates Lee Kerry second and Steve Ringer third, also suggests a fish meal-based groundbait, Swim Stim black, and he added: "If make a little mix, putting a couple of handfuls in

a little tub with a couple of handfuls of groundbait and that makes a separate mix.

“That will provide enough bait for 20 minutes or so of fishing and I do that to see if the mix works. If it doesn't, I go back to pellets or groundbait but, by using the working pot, I control what is going in the swim.” The other benefit, he said, is that it does not wreck a batch of bait.

Hookbait is really important, said Wootton, who is a consultant for Dynamite Baits, as that is what fish are going to pick up. For fish from 8oz to 2lb, the 3mm Wowsers are superb and there is a selection of colours. He prefers pink and yellow, but other colours can work on different days.

Generally, Wootton starts on a pink or yellow but, the important thing, is the size, and 3mm small baits are recommended for this time of year. Why? We are targeting fish with small mouths.

On the top of the feeder you can, possibly until Christmas, feed a few pellets, 6mm are suggested, and two or three can “make a rattle on the surface” and put extra food in the swim.

Loading a feeder is also important. Wootton presses in first layer firmly and doesn't mind if he reels back and finds the layer still there. Then he loads the Wowser and adds a new product, Wowser spray, which has just come on the market.

He said: “We know what it is like when the water is really coloured, and the water is really cold, we need something just a little bit extra to help get a response. A wee spray with the concentrated spray, and you can smell it right away.

“In coloured water, you need to add something extra to your bait and cover the top of the bait. I don't want to see any hook bait poking through. I want a layer of pellets over the top.”